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Historical Society of Palm Desert

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The Hourglass

Community
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"PALM DESERT: FROM DREAM TO REALITY" - THE VIDEOTAPE
For sale at the Historical Society NOW!

This spectacular tape is available for viewing and/or purchase on Mon./Tues./Thurs. from 10:00-3:00 at the Old Fire House, 72-861 El Paseo. The introductory price is $9.95 plus tax. You may order by mail for $13.72, tax and shipping included. Make checks payable to: Historical Society of Palm Desert (no cash, please) and mail to: P.O. Box 77, Palm Desert, CA 92261.

The videotape captures and preserves the earliest days of development of Palm Desert as a city. It was produced by Ted Lennon, principal owner of Lowe Enterprises, in a joint effort with the Ahmanson Commercial Group. The entertaining documentary focuses on the efforts of the late Clifford Henderson to create the ideal community for visitors and year round residents.

Lennor is quoted as saying, "I first met Cliff in 1974 when our firm was retained to supervise renovation and future development of Shadow Mountain. I was fascinated by his stories of the beginnings of our city and it has long been my dream to bring his priceless film clips current and share his early vision."

Included are 16mm clips from the archives of Marian Henderson and photos from the Historical Society files. These feature treasured vintage footage of El Paseo as a dirt road and Shadow Mountain's renowned figure-eight swimming pool surrounded by open, undeveloped desert.

Proceeds benefit the Historical Society and we are most grateful. Many thanks to Ted Lennon, Lowe Enterprises and the Ahmanson Commercial Group. Appreciation also to Valerie Bizier of Communication Concepts who has been helpful in working with our office.

Give yourself a treat. Come in soon for your tape.
You'll want more than one when you see it.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS: Sherm and Lady Smith, Natalee Kubas of Foote Ranch, Grete Cox, Teri Armstrong

VOLUNTEERS who are signed up for orientation:

Helene Smith Harrison
Frances Jo Oetting
Jeanne Ahrens
Bev Riley
Mary Safe
Dick Preble
Ed and Sheila Benson
Adele and Edward Ruxton

IN JEAN'S OWN WORDS:

Could it be that life began 20 years ago when I moved to the desert?

Jean Hollenbeck, Vice President of the Historical Society of Palm Desert, also active in Garden Club of the Desert, Panhellenic, P.E.O. & Friends of Library

Not really -- as much as I love the desert my roots are in Oregon. I was born and raised in the small town of La Grande in eastern Oregon and after graduating from Oregon State University I married my college sweetheart. Following four years as an Air Force wife, we returned to Oregon. When he finished dental school in Portland, we moved with our three children to Corvallis where he opened his practice. When my husband died in 1966 I completed a Masters degree at O.S.U. and became Assistant Director of Financial Aid.

My Campus work was very interesting, especially since it was during the turmoil of the late 60s and early 70s. One of the big issues on campus was co-educational dormitories, now an accepted practice. Ho Hum!

In 1974 I became reacquainted with E. C. "Holly" Hollenbeck after he lost his wife, Kay. We had gone to high school and college together and had many mutual acquaintances. We were married in the spring of 1975. I came to Palm Desert in June when the temperature was 105. That was the same month as a 3-day sandstorm, followed by floods in 1976 and 1977 -- to say nothing of small earthquakes! Even then I loved the desert and coming from the Willamette Valley in Oregon it was good to be warm instead of wet!

Our neighbor, Avalon Warren, immediately involved me in Friends of the College of the Desert Library. I met many of my friends through various volunteer projects. One of my greatest satisfactions is having been one of the founding board members of the Palm Desert Senior Center along with Hank Clark, Jean Ann Hirschi, Jo Benes, Duke Baker, Bud Reinbold and George Sweet. We held functions in churches and conducted business in borrowed office space. The doubters told us there was no need for a Senior Center in this affluent community, but after receiving the Joslyn Grant the future was assured. Today the Senior Center performs an important function in the Cove Communities.

I also served for three years on the Steering Committee for the Carlotta Retirement Center -- the first of its kind in the desert -- and continued for three years on the Board.

My husband came to the desert in 1947 after the war and has owned and operated H & H Lumber since then. We have a blended family of seven children, fourteen grandchildren and, of course, they love to come to the desert!

HOORAY.....THE CONNECTION IS MADE!

The long awaited transfer from septic tank to city sewer system has been accomplished. The Old Firehouse is officially connected. For a while our little building was like a fort under siege -- jackhammering, excavation, barricades and heavy equipment disrupted the serenity. Ingenuity was required to co-exist.

Particularly on the afternoon of the Todd reception, when parking was difficult and water was shut off, there was extra gallantry in action. Thanks to Bonnie Bowie and the Callahans, Dan and Barbara. Our indomitable president, Bob Keedy, was there, having had the patch from cataract surgery removed earlier in the day. Wouldn't you know, he had to be discouraged from toting chairs. Kudos to all!

The Society office will have a very new look when paving of the parking lot and driveways and painting of the building are completed.

VISITORS FROM AFAR WHO KNEW US WELL

President Keedy recently hosted visitors who supplied historic overtones. Myrna Herrick Wenger and her husband, Gary, of Wayland, Iowa were in the area. Myrna is the daughter of Palm Desert's first Fire Chief, George Andrew (Andy) "Tiny" Herrick, now deceased. He was Fire Chief from 1956-66. President Keedy was a volunteer fireman then and knew Andy well.

When Myrna was small, she and her parents lived at the station, so she had interesting details to share. Myrna slept in the room which is now Bonnie's office. Tiny footprints in the concrete walkway leading to the front door are hers. We have passed over them many times, unaware. Now they are brushed out and visible.

Coincidentally, in an unrelated visit, Jim and Shirley McClellan of Apple Valley stopped by. Jim assumed Tiny's job in 1966 and the McClellans lived at the station from '66-74. Their children attended school in Palm Desert.

Kay and Walt Eichenhofer also were recent visitors. Kay is the daughter of Tommy Tomson, architect and planner, who laid out the streets of Palm Desert.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS.....Many thanks!

Dolly Olesen.....Large quantity of Palm Springs Life magazines
Millie Bird.....Old issues of Desert Magazine to fill gaps in our collection. Millie is book sale chairman of Friends of the C.O.D. Library.
Rheo Lawman.....Yashica camera, zoom lens and tripod
Lee Valdez.....Kona, the firehouse dog, modeled from life. Perfect with our old engine. Lee knew the Dalmation.
Shirley Arrowsmith.....Tommy Tomson's book, "Jesuit Gold of Lower California"
Adele Ruge North..... The late Dr. Ruge's diary, correspondence and legal papers concerning establishment of Palm Desert's first library
Iris Herbekian.....Many hours of work to develop logo design for the Hourglass
Julie Concoby.....Completion of Hourglass logo -- if you need graphic art, call Juliart at 341-1230
Eric L. Vogt.....Vintage uniform with badge of Dept. of Forestry, Fire Protection. Eric is Dep. Ch. of Riverside County Fire Dept.

PAT WOULD'VE LOVED IT! A fitting memorial day for Pat Anderson

The Children's Literature Festival held in December at the Palm Desert Civic Center Park Rose Garden was a day of delight for children and families. Some 20 display booths represented local organizations, schools, libraries, book stores, service clubs....and individual authors read their own books at the Story Telling Corner. The Palm Desert High School Drama Club, David J and the 3 Little Pigs, the tooth fairy, Mother Goose and nursery rhyme characters were accompanied by the Rainbow Lady on guitar -- plus clowns.....balloons.....face painting.....food.....it was all there!

The day was clear and bright and the City of Palm Desert's Civic Arts Committee is to be commended on this fine event designated as a Pat Anderson Memorial to honor her many efforts in the community. Pat taught creative writing at the College of the Desert and was active in the Civic Arts Committee, the Press Club and the Writers' Guild.

We are indebted to Pat, as well. She was one of the organizing committee members for the Historical Society, along with Anne Carpenter, Hal Kapp and Lela Thompson. The Society has some memorabilia from these individuals. If you have something you could add to the 'Pioneer' file, please share. Letters, photos, news items, any mementos associated with these wonderful fore parents will be welcome in the archives. We join with the Civic Arts Committee in honoring the past as we serve the future.

THE INCOMPARABLE ENERGY AND ARTISTRY OF ART AND DOTTIE TODD

If you were there, no words are needed. If you were not there, no words can explain the magic of the 90 minute, heart-and-a-half performance given by Art and Dottie Todd at the Old Firehouse on January 11. When Marian Henderson alerted the Society that these beloved entertainers were in town, how to get friends and fans together became the challenge.

At an impromptu, informal and unforgettable gathering, Art and Dottie transported 40 Society members back to the fabled ambience of the Shadow Mountain Club in the fifties. The energy of Art's banjo and the compelling gifts of these two consummate entertainers, both now in their eighties, reintroduced "When the Sun Shines on Shadow Mountain" and Cliff Henderson's favorite "Up a Lazy River." Strains of "Chanson de'Amour" their million seller recording and Dottie's lyrical voice on Hawaiian numbers "Beyond the Reef" and "Hawaiian Wedding Song" had listeners enthralled. The group was swept into sing-alongs and happy recall of early days in the desert. To be sure, there were some misty eyes!

Following their long tenure at Shadow Mountain, the Todds were nine years at The Dunes in Las Vegas. They have toured extensively and entertained in clubs and on cruise ships around the world. For the past 15 years they have lived in Honolulu where one of their original songs "Sweet Someone" hit #1 on the charts. "Secrets" another original tune is planned for future release and will feature the popular vocalist, Billy Joel.

We love you, Art and Dottie. Any time with you is PRIME TIME!

WISH LIST from Bonnie Bowie, Board member & Society secretary:

Small-sized office desk Folding chairs Scanner for computer
Silver coffee & tea service Microwave

If you can supply any of these, we'll be ever so grateful!!

Chuckles from old Palm Springs Life magazines:

"The little signs mean it's a nature trail."

"Does that have a sex life, like the date?"

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY 24 BOARD MEETING:

Home of the President, Bob Keedy, was the location of the meeting because workmen were completing plumbing hook-ups at the office. An early meeting on a nippy morning was made cozy by the Prez. He had a crackling fire in the grate and a juice bar with coffee and fresh baked rolls. So pleasant was the setting, board members joked that the president's home should become the regular meeting site.

Videotapes "From Dream to Reality" have generated great interest.

Annual Events - * '96 Mini-Muster = the fire safety program for third graders.

* Palette Club/Historical Society spring art exhibit = on hold at present.

* Western Barbecue = the date is set APRIL 13 (mark your calendars and watch for more information.) Remember last year's wonderful food, music and spirited cloggers? Bonnie Bowie and Gary Olesen have great ideas for this year.

Contributions - This year the Historical Society was one of six non-profit organizations to benefit from Golf Cart Parade proceeds derived from raffle ticket sales and business support. The check from Parade Charities, Inc. made us most happy. Also, a contribution was made to our Society by Waste Management of the Desert. Waste Management executive, Kermit Martin, formerly served on our Board.

Reports: Curatorial, Membership/Volunteers, and Newsletter. The Hourglass logo was adopted and a budget item approved for its printing for the coming year.

Nominating Committee was named with Ed Mullins as chairman, to prepare a slate for the April mail ballot.

Consultant, Jan Holmlund, commended Ginny Folkers for her excellent work on the curatorial files. A fee schedule and guidelines for providing archival and film service to the public was accepted as drawn up by Jan. She, again, emphasized protection and proper use of our collections.....our basic reason for existence.

Next Meeting of the Board is set for April 17.

Hourglass editor, Theda Lundquist